THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) State of Forest Report 1997 published by Forest Survey of India indicates a marginal decrease of 166 sq. km. in the forest cover of the State. Report also reveals that 1,062 sq.km. of dense forest has changed to open forest. However, the area under mangroves has increased by 16 sq.km.

(b) Although some incidents of poaching of rare and endangered species are reported by the state from time to time, there are no reports of any large scale poaching of such species.

(c) Major steps being taken by the Government for conservation of forest and wildlife are as under:

(i) Afforestiation programmes are being undertaken.

(ii) Guideliens have been issued to in volve village communities in protect ion and regeneration of degaraded forests through Joint For est Management.

(iii) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted.to regulate diversion of forest land.

(iv) A centrally sponsored scheme "Modern Forest Fire Control Methods" is being implemented to protect and conserve the forest from fire.

(v) Hunting of wild animals included in Schedules I to IV of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 has been banned.

(vi) Special measures for protection and conservation of tigers and elephants and their habitat are being implemented.

(vii) A network of 17 wildlife sanctuaries and 2 national parks covering area of 6677 sq.km. has been set up for conservaion of wild flora and fauna.

(viii) Raids are carried out by the wildlife authorities, whenever information of illegal trading in wildlife animals reaches them.

(ix) International Trade in Endangered Species of animals and articles made thereof is regulated under the provisions of the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Hazardous environmental conditionsin Indrapaastha and Rajghat Thermal Plants

1995. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FOR ESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indraprastha and Rajghat Thermal Power Plant workers are dangerously exposed to deadly fumes emitted by the plants and majority of the workers are suffering from respiratory disorders;

(b) if so, the details thereof stating the number of workers in each of the power plants who died due to exposure to the deadly fumes during the last three years; and the number of workers suffering from respiratiory disorders in each of the plants; and

(c) the preventive measures taken by Gov ernment to improve the hazardous environmen tal conditions in these power plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

Extent of air and noise pollution in Delhi

1996. SHRI JOYANTA ROY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be please to state:

(a) whether, of late, the extent of air and noise pollution has increased mainifold in the capital rendering Delhi as the most polluted city in the World:

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take to tackle the alarming situation; and

(c) whether Government would like to enlist the active cooperation of the various voluntary organisations and NGOs in this regard and if so, whether the Government have formulated any scheme in this direction?